

For example, Colombia has implemented a preferential trade agreement with Argentina and Brazil. As a result, U.S. farm products are rapidly being displaced in the Colombia market by products from those countries. So it is not too surprising that between 2007 and 2010, U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia fell by more than half, and it looks like matters are going to get even worse. A Montana wheat grower who testified at yesterday's hearing noted that the U.S. share of Colombia's wheat market fell from 73 percent in 2008 to 43 percent in 2010. He also stated that following implementation of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement, which is expected to occur this year, U.S. exports of wheat to Colombia will drop to zero unless the United States implements its trade agreement with Colombia. So U.S. agricultural exports to Colombia are already falling. U.S. manufactured goods and U.S. services will be next.

It does not have to be this way. We do not have to continue giving away the growing Colombia market to our competitors. If we want to boost our exports to Colombia, all we have to do is implement the U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement.

The Obama administration had earlier stated that it wanted to address Colombia's internal labor situation before moving ahead with the agreement. But the administration delayed taking any meaningful steps to address their concerns with the Colombian government for years. A few months ago, the administration finally got serious about engaging with Colombia. And, lo and behold, in a matter of weeks—in a matter of weeks—they were able to develop a labor action plan that addressed their concerns in a meaningful and concrete way. The administration discovered that, in their own words, they had a willing partner in Colombia. The fact of the matter is that Colombia has been taking steps for years to address issues related to violence against unionists and has always been willing to do more. Why it took the administration so long to figure it out is a mystery to me.

So the Obama administration has now negotiated an action plan that addresses its concerns regarding the labor situation in Colombia. You would think we would have clarity that, once the steps in the action plan are fulfilled, the administration would submit the agreement to Congress for its consideration. But we do not have this clarity. There has been no clear answer to this very simple question. Instead, there seem to be more preconditions on submitting the agreement that are not even related to the agreement itself, such as extension of trade adjustment assistance and permanent normal trade relations for Russia.

This is very odd. Most economists would agree that there are likely to be very few workers who will lose their jobs because of implementation of the Colombia trade agreement. After all,

the U.S.-Colombia trade agreement will result in almost no growth in imports from Colombia. This is the case as almost all Colombian products have entered the United States duty free over the past two decades on account of U.S. trade preference programs. In contrast, Colombia's average applied tariff on U.S. imports is over 12 percent, and they can reach as high as 388 percent.

Moreover, the administration itself testified that implementation of the Colombia agreement: will expand exports of U.S. goods to Colombia by more than a billion dollars—that is with a "B"—increase U.S. GDP by \$2.5 billion; and support thousands of additional jobs for our workers, at a time when we need jobs, and when we need to pull this economy out of the mess it is in. So it is hard to see further extension of the TAA program as a necessary precondition for approval of an agreement that will help our economy and support jobs in the United States. It is a no-brainer.

I am also bewildered by any attempts to precondition submission of the Colombia agreement to congressional support for permanent normal trade relations for Russia. These two issues are totally unrelated. Given the current disregard for the rule of law and the many trade problems that persist in Russia today, it is hard to argue that the time is ripe for Congress to grant Russia permanent normal trade relations.

Moreover, it would be particularly ironic and sad to condition passage of the Colombia trade agreement with permanent normal trade relations for Russia. Over the past 4 years, Colombia has been a reliable U.S. trading partner, ready and willing to remove its tariffs on U.S. imports through implementation of our trade agreement. During these same years, Russia has seemingly gone out of its way on numerous occasions to prove to the United States that it is an unreliable trading partner.

It is fundamentally unfair to continue to treat a friend and ally like Colombia in this ridiculous way. Unfortunately, it is not the first time Democratic leaders have put one of our closest Latin American allies in this position. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement was first signed on November 22, 2006—almost 5 years ago. Democratic leaders refused to consider the agreement until their additional demands were met on labor, the environment, and intellectual property. The Bush administration responded by working with then-Speaker PELOSI on a package of changes that were understood would lead to consideration of the agreement. But once they had these changes in hand, the Democratic leadership in the House balked, citing yet more issues that had to be resolved. When President Bush submitted the Colombia agreement to Congress for its consideration utilizing trade promotion authority procedures in

April 2008, the Democratic leadership refused to allow the agreement to come up for a vote. Instead, they changed the rules, and the agreement has since languished for almost 5 years.

It is time for the excuses to end. Resolution of unrelated issues such as trade adjustment assistance and PNTR for Russia should not be used as further barriers to submission of this agreement. Colombia is taking the steps laid out by the Obama administration that the administration has said are necessary before the President will formally submit the agreement to Congress. Once those steps are taken in June, I fully expect the administration to finally fulfill its end of the bargain and formally submit the agreement for congressional approval without further conditions. If not, the administration is making a conscious decision to continue denying U.S. exporters improved access to the Colombian market, and to undermine our standing as a credible ally in Latin America.

It is a no-brainer to realize that Colombia is one of our best friends. When you compare it to some of its neighbors, such as Venezuela—and I can name other countries that are undermining our very country as we sit here and stand here. The fact of the matter is, Colombia is a friend. Friends should not be treated this way. It is ridiculous what is going on. There is very little need for trade adjustment assistance in this particular deal. It is just another way of sucking from the taxpayers more money for purposes that literally do not exist.

I hope the administration will wake up and realize this would be a tremendous achievement for them. There is no reason in the world why they should not want to do this. It would be a sure creator of jobs at a time when we need jobs. It will even up a situation that up to this point has been sad. And it will help our country. Let's quit playing games with this free trade agreement. Let's get it up. Let's vote on it, and let's restore our relationship with Colombia to the great relationship it deserves to be.

Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN.) Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### BIG OIL

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, as I stand here today, I am trying to figure out what our activities look like to the average American. They know we still have serious economic problems, though we are on a good track, and I think it is fair to say we are feeling a little bit better. But we were cautioned

by President Obama the other day—those of us who had a chance to sit in a room with him—that while things are looking up, there is still a long way to go before our people are back to work and before they can afford the basics they need to take care of their families.

While this is going on we have seen the most incredible courage, the most well-developed military plan imaginable, and the courage of our people who went in to apprehend Osama bin Laden. Thank goodness, nobody was hurt. It was a job well done, and the execution of a plan to bring to justice a man who helped kill almost 3,000 people at the World Trade Center and hundreds more in other attacks on American facilities—the Embassy in Tanzania, the Embassy in Kenya, the ship *USS Cole*—taking American lives. That is what they were determined to do.

President Obama, after lots of previous administrations looking at things, trying to figure out what to do to stop these terrorist attacks on America, had the courage to make a decision that would have rested so heavily on anyone in that governing position. He decided to take the risk knowing that our people were so well trained, so well committed that the chance of their failure was very slim but very real.

Good things have happened in America. Not only did this operation against bin Laden succeed in at least slowing down, if not eliminating, some of the terrorist threats in America, it also lifted the spirits of Americans across the country. We all felt better about it because we fought back against this terror threat.

But now I look at where we are and listen to the debate and look at what the House of Representatives has done with their majority. At this point in time, when we are still reeling from shock, having had perhaps the greatest recession since the Great Depression of the twenties and thirties, instead of trying to figure out ways to solve the problems, our colleagues on the Republican side are trying to figure out ways to punish the public. They would say to them: OK, so you don't have enough jobs—we are going to try to reduce the possibility that we will have enough, to reduce the possibility that a person who can learn but is not well off can get an education. They want to take away those opportunities. They want to take away programs that have succeeded.

We look back at our history in the last 90 years and ask: How did we get here? How did we get where we are? Mr. President, 400,000 Americans were killed in World War II. Then we saw growth in our country because of planning during President Roosevelt's days in the New Deal and the planning that President Johnson offered. We had Social Security developed, and then came Medicare, and then came Medicaid—programs that help people.

On a personal basis, for me, those years I am talking about were particu-

larly significant. I was born to a poor family. My father found it very difficult to earn a living, as did millions of other Americans. He worked in a silk factory in the city of Paterson, NJ. He was a man very conscious of his health. But the problem was that the environment was such that he contracted cancer when he was 42. He died when he was 43 years old. His brother, working in the same type of facility, died when he was 52. My grandfather, who worked in the mills, died when he was 56 years old. That was life as I saw it. Things were bleak.

My mother was a 37-year-old widow, and she had to carry on through my father's sickness. They bought a store to make ends meet. It did not do very well, but it kept her going for a while. When all was over and my father died, I was already enlisted in the Army. My mother had no resources left. She owed doctors, owed pharmacists, owed hospitals. Every penny she had was gone. I looked at this experience and thought: Something is not fair. But I was lucky. I was able to get my education under the GI bill, as did 8 million other people who wore the American uniform during those dark days.

What happened? I got an education. I went to Columbia University. I was lucky. My tuition was paid for. I even got some money for books and some things I might have needed along the way were provided. It made a world of difference.

I was able, with two friends, to start a business. The company is fairly well known. It is called ADP. The three of us started with nothing, the two brothers with whom I was associated. Their father also worked in the factories of Paterson. They were immigrants as were my grandparents. But along came this educational opportunity, and with that came an opportunity to start a business. Today that company, ADP, is one of the four most creditworthy companies in the United States. They are listed as a three-star company.

ADP has 45,000 employees. They work in 21 countries. Most of the operation is in America but some of it is outside. It employs over 45,000 employees and helps businesses by taking over a particular part of their recordkeeping needs. It helps make things operate better in these companies.

Every month there is a labor statistic that is put out. It is done by ADP, my old company. The numbers are more reliable than those of the Bureau of Labor Statistics because the data is fresher. Every week, some 35 million people get their paychecks and that is where the data comes from. I left the company when I came here 29 years ago.

From all these experiences, I saw an America that gave people like me a chance to do things and created what is called the greatest generation in the history of America. Now, Mr. President, I am beginning to see what I believe is a great generation developing—the number of people getting to work,

fewer claims for unemployment insurance, more consumer spending, and retail sales are up. The signs are good.

So when I look at what is going on in the House of Representatives, I see the stubbornness of our colleagues who refuse to step in and say: Look, we have to keep the government strong, we have to make sure we supply the kind of energy to the government that can move America along. Their response is cut, cut, cut, when all the critical social programs I mentioned were a needed expansion of government services. I am not one of those who want to cut valuable programs. I am one of those who want to reduce the deficit.

Mr. President, when you look at a balance sheet, a financial statement, it carries two parts: One part is expenses—costs—and the other part is revenues. You can cut expenses all you want, but if the revenues don't improve, you go bankrupt. It is pretty simple. And that is where we are being asked to put our future on the line. Hold the debt ceiling as ransom? For what? For what? It will destroy the competence in America. It will destroy our ability to be the country we are, the country that still leads the world despite competition.

When I left home this morning, I passed an Exxon station that is fairly near my home. There was a sign on the pump that gave the price of their gas—\$4.79 a gallon. For people who have any distance to travel, this is painful. This is painful. This is part of the income they can use for basic things that are needed.

But what do we see? We see major gasoline companies, and we ask ourselves: Whose side are our colleagues on? It appears they are on the side of the gasoline companies. I think we ought to be more conscientious about this and make sure the public understands we are there for them, for the majority of people in this country who are sick and tired of seeing the price-gouging we have seen from the gasoline companies.

There was a Finance Committee hearing today, and I watched and heard the heads of these companies—the five big oil companies—say what they are worried about. Well, they are worried about the prospect of losing \$4 billion a year they get in subsidies. And there was even kind of a caustic comment that it might be un-American to take away the subsidies these people get. Mr. President, \$4 billion a year in subsidies.

When you look at what is going on with these companies, you see astounding results. Make no mistake, greed is fueling their appetite, and the bigger it gets, the more they want.

During the years of World War II, there was an excess profits tax that said companies shouldn't be feeding off of the opportunity the war presented and taking advantage of the public. Well, we are at war, in case people have forgotten about it. Afghanistan is a

real war. We still have the remnants of the difficulties in Iraq, we have piracy on the seas, and we have all kinds of things we have to keep fighting for. So there ought to be some recompense for our country for the opportunity they have to make this kind of money.

These are their earnings during the first 3 months of 2011, which is still part of the recession time: Exxon, their end-of-quarter profits were over \$10 billion. Shell, almost \$9 billion. BP, \$7.1 billion—that is after their foul mistake in the Gulf of Mexico that cost plenty of money. They still made that kind of money. And Chevron made \$6.2 billion. Little ConocoPhillips only made \$3 billion in that quarter.

When you think about it, the irony is how well BP has done—a company that spewed 200 million gallons of oil into the ocean last year. Why is our government shoving billions of dollars into the pockets of their executives, their lawyers? Why don't we use the money to invest in a stronger America and pay down our debt? I would like to see us doing that.

Big Oil's greed is helping to inflate our deficit. Every day, Americans are footing the bill. You would think our colleagues on the other side of the aisle would want to put a stop to this madness, to step up for the average person. Well, so far we are not doing what I would like to see being done for the public, for the average citizen. Big Oil is doing everything in its power to protect its subsidies, and the Republicans are doing everything in their power to help them. The Republicans say that eliminating these wasteful subsidies will raise gas prices. That is wrong. That is plain wrong.

Look at the compensation of the CEOs here. Now, they are not selling pretzels or making potato chips; they are dealing with a commodity that is essential to the functioning of our society, of mankind. The CEO at Exxon got \$29 million; ConocoPhillips, \$18 million; Chevron, \$16 million. These are all in 2010, for the year just recently concluded. I want to make certain people understand that companies paying their fair share in taxes isn't going to hurt the industry. It just means Big Oil executives may have to make do with a smaller swimming pool or maybe smaller yacht, but no real pain or punishment there.

The fact is, the Big Oil CEOs aren't feeling this recession. But instead of making our government more fiscally responsible by ending the giveaways to Big Oil, the Republicans have another idea: They want to cut the deficit by ending Medicare as we know it. That won't save us any money in the long term. It will simply increase the expenditures, as many are forced to pay more out of their own pockets for their health. Seniors are struggling. The big oil companies aren't.

I wish the other side would listen a little more closely to the wishes of the American people. Almost three-quarters of Americans say we should stop

giving billions in tax breaks to the big oil companies each year. The American people know these subsidies are unnecessary, ineffective, and immoral. And it is not as if the oil industry is taking its annual \$4 billion windfall and investing it in our country's future. No. In addition to going into the paychecks of the Big Oil executives, this money is being used to line the pockets of the industry's lawyers and lobbyists who are seen frequently and obviously around here.

I have seen this time and time again during my career in the Senate. I was the first Senator on the scene at the *Exxon Valdez* when it rammed into the Alaskan shoreline in 1989. Instead of being forthcoming and doing what they should have done, Exxon fought over every penny with the communities in Alaska—the families and the fishermen whose lives it destroyed. Instead of stepping up to pay the court-awarded damages—\$5 billion—Exxon said: To heck with that verdict. We will fight it. We will fight it all the way. And they did, for years. They knocked down the amount from \$5 billion in punitive damages to \$500 million. I guarantee you they paid a lot of money to the lawyers and lobbyists, but they would rather give it to them than to the American people. That is what that shows. In the end, it took more than 20 years for Exxon to pay for what it had done. Some victims died while waiting for the company to make things right.

So we should not be giving Big Oil \$4 billion in tax breaks each year. Their profits, which last year exceeded \$100 billion, are larger than lots of countries. We should be investing in ways to break our dangerous addiction to oil. We should be investing in innovative approaches to moving people and goods, including increasing funds for transit, creating a world-class high-speed rail network, and expanding the number of electric cars on our roads. We should also boost our country's promising clean energy industry, making sure we lead the world in the export of environmental products that are proudly stamped with the "Made in the USA" label.

Don't be fooled—drilling will not, in the final analysis, get us out of our energy problems. We use almost a quarter of the world's oil, but we sit on less than 3 percent of the world's reserve. So drilling is going to just quickly bring the end of our ability to produce oil. That will be the conclusion. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, even if we open every offshore drilling area in the continental United States, the average price of gasoline would drop by just 3 cents a gallon by the year 2030. Here, we see it: The benefit of increased drilling will save us 3 cents a gallon in two decades. That is not very promising for people who have to rely on the automobile for all kinds of things in their lives.

Continuing to subsidize oil companies only increases our dependence on dirty fuels. And even as our children

pay a heavy price—with asthma victims and other respiratory problems—it keeps us on a dead-end road to sky-high energy bills, more oil spills like the one we saw in the gulf, and dangerous pollution levels. Investing in clean alternatives to oil, cars that go further on a gallon of gas, and smart transportation, such as mass transit, are the only realistic solutions to our energy challenges.

Beyond clean energy investments, we should take the \$4 billion we give away to Big Oil each year and use that money to pay down our deficit. It is pretty clear that we cannot restore fiscal sanity to our government unless we start paying more attention to the revenue column in our ledger.

I was a CEO for many years. I know you cannot run a company or a country without a strong revenue flow. Ending the government's wasteful oil industry subsidies will not be enough to erase our deficit, but it is a good place to start.

I call on my colleagues, have a citizen's heart. Look at this as you would any other obligation you have in your life. Make sure our country is strong and that our middle-class and our modest earners can look ahead for a decent life for themselves, educating their children and protecting their parents with proper health care. Get Big Oil off the welfare rolls. Let's end the industry's tax breaks and end our country's addiction to oil and other dirty fuels.

Let's invest in clean energy and smart transportation—and cut the windfalls for the oil industry lobbyists and lawyers. I want to make sure—and I am sure all of us do, down deep—our grandchildren and children inherit a country that is fiscally sound and morally responsible.

I yield the floor.

#### 2011 NATIONAL POLICE WEEK

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, this afternoon I had the honor of attending the Top Cops event hosted by President Obama at the White House. I will be honored Sunday to attend the National Peace Officers Memorial ceremony. I appreciate the support the President is showing for our law enforcement officers not just this week but every week. Local law enforcement is critical to the peace and security of our families and communities in Vermont and across the country.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy signed a proclamation to designate May 15 as Peace Officers Memorial Day and the week in which that date falls as Police Week. Every year during Police Week, thousands of law enforcement officers from around the country converge on Washington, DC, to honor those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice keeping all of us safe. I want to mark this week by recognizing the heroic women and men in law enforcement who are dedicated to just that. More than 900,000 law enforcement officers guard our communities at great